

the MCC's eligibility criteria, including controlling corruption and investing in health and education.

I look forward to the results of Sunday's election and the opportunity for our two countries to work together for a brighter future.

10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE EXPANSION OF NATO

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the 10-year anniversary of the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO.

During the debate on whether to expand NATO, I said that this debate holds special resonance for me. Growing up as a Polish American in east Baltimore, I learned about the burning of Warsaw at the end of the Second World War. The Germans burned Warsaw to the ground—killing a quarter of a million people—as Soviet troops watched from the other side of the Vistula River. I learned about the Katyn massacre—where Russia murdered more than four thousand Polish military officers and intellectuals in the Katyn Forest at the start of the Second World War.

The tragedies that Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary experienced in the aftermath of the Second World War are etched on my heart. That was the one reason I fought so long and so hard for Poland and the others to be part of the western family of nations.

Despite the importance of history, my support for NATO enlargement was based on the future. My support was based on what is best for America. Thankfully when we voted to bring Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary into NATO, the yeas carried the day. Since that day, those three nations have exceeded every expectation as strong allies of the United States, and the naysayers' fears during the debate on the NATO expansion have also been shown as unwarranted.

The NATO expansion nations of 1999, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary have more than lived up to their obligations under the NATO alliance. Poland has made enormous investments into all areas of its military. As a result, over the last 10 years the number of Polish troops serving on NATO missions has steadily grown from 1500 to over 3500. Another 300 Polish military personnel serve in prestigious academic and administrative positions in NATO institutions around the world. Polish naval vessels also operate as part of NATO standing reaction forces all over the world, providing cutting edge mine detection and countermeasures expertise.

Poland has also emerged as one of the United States' strongest allies in the war against terrorism and extremism around the globe. Polish troops accompanied American soldiers into Iraq when they invaded in 2003, and maintained a mission that grew as large as 2500 troops up until the end of 2008. Nearly 30 Polish soldiers gave

their lives in Iraq. Poland also has one of the largest contingents in Afghanistan. Over 1600 Polish soldiers fight every day to stabilize the Afghan province of Ghazni. Nine Polish soldiers have been killed and dozens wounded in Iraq.

In closing, I wish to speak a bit about history. My colleagues have heard me speak about Poland's history many times in the past. For 40 years, I watched the people of Poland live under brutal, communist rule. They did not choose Communism—it was forced upon them. Each ethnic group in America brings our own history to our wonderful American mosaic. Bringing these three nations into NATO family of nations 10 years ago was one of the best decisions we made in the post-cold war era. Of all the things I have done in my years in the Senate, this is one of those for which I am most proud.

LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I wish to express my grave concern at the continuing massacres, kidnappings, and terror orchestrated by the Lord's Resistance Army, the LRA, in northeastern Congo and southern Sudan. As many of my colleagues know, I have long been engaged in efforts to bring an end to this—one of Africa's longest running and most gruesome rebel wars. In 2004, I authored and Congress passed the Northern Uganda Crisis Response Act, which committed the United States to work vigorously for a lasting resolution to this conflict. In 2007, I visited displacement camps in northern Uganda and saw first-hand the impact the violence orchestrated by the LRA has had throughout the region. I have been frustrated as the LRA has been able to move in recent years across porous regional borders to gain new footholds in northeastern Congo, southern Sudan, and even the Central African Republic, with little consequence.

Just over 2 months ago, the Ugandan, Congolese, and South Sudanese militaries launched a joint offensive against the LRA's primary bases in northeastern Congo. Serious concerns have been raised about the planning and implementation of this operation. Since the military strike began, the LRA has been able to carry out a series of new massacres in Congo and Sudan, leaving over 900 people dead. That is a killing rate that, according to the Genocide Intervention Network, exceeds that in Darfur or even in Somalia. Hundreds of new children have been abducted and new communities have been devastated and displaced. It is tragically clear that insufficient attention and resources were devoted to ensuring the protection of civilians during the operation. Meanwhile, the LRA's leader, Joseph Kony, and his commanders escaped the initial aerial assault and have continued to evade the militaries. Thus far, this operation has resulted in the worst-case scenario: it has failed to stop the LRA, while

spurring the rebels to intensify their attacks against civilians.

I am not ruling out that this offensive—still ongoing—may yet succeed. Indeed, I strongly hope it does. On several occasions last year, Kony refused to sign a comprehensive peace agreement with the Government of Uganda, an agreement that even included provisions to shield him from an International Criminal Court indictment. At the same time, as negotiations were still underway, his forces launched new attacks in Congo, Sudan, and, for the first time, Central African Republic. They abducted hundreds of youths to rebuild their ranks. It was apparent that Kony was not interested in a negotiated settlement, despite the good efforts of mediators and northern Ugandan civil society leaders. I supported those peace negotiations, but it became increasingly clear that the LRA's leaders would only be stopped when forced to do so.

For many years I have pressed for a political solution to the crisis in northern Uganda. I pressed for the international community to work collectively to support efforts to bring peace and stability to this war-torn area. And against all odds, the most recent peace talks in Juba, South Sudan, did see a collective effort but to no avail. These negotiations were not perfect but for some time offered a path forward and provided a framework to address the underlying grievances of communities in northern Uganda. But then, it became increasingly clear that Joseph Kony had no intention of ever signing the final agreement and had instead been conducting new abductions to replenish his rebel group. It became increasingly clear that Kony and his top commanders would stand in the way of any comprehensive political solution.

These failed talks justify military action against the LRA's top command, but that action must be carefully considered. As we have seen too many times, offensive operations that are poorly designed and poorly carried out risk doing more harm than good, inflaming a situation rather than resolving it. Before launching any operation against the rebels, the regional militaries should have ensured that their plan had a high probability of success, anticipated contingencies, and made precautions to minimize dangers to civilians. It is widely known that when facing military offensive in the past, the LRA have quickly dispersed and committed retaliatory attacks against civilians. Furthermore, to be sustainable, military action needs to be placed within a larger counterinsurgency strategy that integrates outreach to local populations, active programs for basic service provision and reconstruction in affected areas, and mechanisms for ex-combatant disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Those mechanisms are especially important in the case of the LRA because of the large number of child abductees who make up the rebel ranks.